In his message, the US President, applauding Indian democracy and economy and acknowledging India as an influential voice in the world community stated that the two countries should work more closely than ever as benefits the two of the world's greatest democracies.

(b) PM had a very cordial meeting with President Clinton in September. Interaction between the two countries has stepped-up at various levels to discuss issues mutual importance. The US Assistant Secretary of State, Karl Inderfurth and the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Thomas Pickering have held discussions in Delhi. The US Secretary of State is visiting Delhi on 18 & 19 November. The US Commerce Secretary and the Secretary, Health and Human Services are also scheduled to visit before the end of this year.

Functioning of India's Embassies in Gulf-countries

180. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a nine-member delegation of MPs went on a 10-day four to the Gulf-countries to find out how Indian Embassies were functioning in these countries;

(b) if so, the outcome of their visit; and

(c) the action being taken, if any, to improve the functioning of the embassies in Gulf-countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERWANI): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The delegation observed the functioning of the Indian missions in the Gulf countries and held discussions with a cross section of the Indian community, and met local dignitaries and Parliamentarians. The delegation's report containing observations and recommendations is under preparation.

(c) Action for improving the functioning of the Indian missions in the Gulf countries is a continuous process. Visits by officials from the Ministry of External Affairs are undertaken from time to time to observe the functioning of the missions and to assess their staffing needs and available facilities with a view to enhance the overall functioning of the missions. An official team visited Gulf countries in May 1997. A Conference of Indian Heads of Missions in the Gulf countries was held in Abu Dhabi in September 1997 to discuss various issues concerning the functionings of the missions.

Strengthening of Relationship Between U.K. and India

181. SHRI SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister had met the British Foreign Secretary, who accompanied Queen Elizabeth during her recent visit to India; and

(b) at what levels close relationship between India and U.K. is likely to be strengthened indicating whether U.K. supported India for the membership of the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) as well as for a seat in the Security Council of United Nations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERWANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Our objective is to work with the UK to strengthen our friendly ties and mutually beneficial cooperation in a wide range of areas. The UK has consistantly supported India's membership of the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM). The decision will be taken by consensus among the 25 ASEAN and European current members of ASEM. Regarding the UNSC seat, India's position is that, in the first instance, objective, global, non-doscriminatory criteria for UNSC expansion which also provides for adequate representation of the developing countries, should be established.

Amnesty to Indian Emigrants by Saudi Government

182. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that thousands of

Indians, mostly Keralites, who had emigrated to Saudi Arabia without valid documents, were sent back under the amnesty granted by the Saudi Government; and

(b) if so, the number of such emigrants alongwith the names of the States to which they belonged and the steps taken by the Central Government for their safe return to the country and to their respective States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAK SHERWANI): (a) It is true that thousands of Indians who had emigrated to Saudi Arabia were sent back under the amnesty granted by the Saudi Government. It is not known whether they entered Saudi Arabia without valid documents.

(b) During the amnesty, Indian Embassy in Riyadh and Consultate General in Jeddah issued a total of 40946 Emergency Certificates (E.Cs) to those Indians who availed of the amnesty to return to India. Of these, a small number of Indians could not avail the amnesty within the stipulated period primarily due to non-availability of seats and difficulties in getting exist visas from Saudi Government. Even they were allowed to leave after the expiry of the amnesty deadline. Though most of the Indians who availed of the amnesty belong to the State of Kerala, Statewise break-up is not available with Indian Mission/Post as the information is not maintained in that form while issuing E.Cs.

Indian Embassy/Consulate made arrangements for 13 special Air India and 5 special Saudi Airways flights to expedite speedy return of Indians to India. Close liaison was maintained with the Saudi Government, who organised ships for deportation of India destitutes. In addition, arrangements were made for smooth immigration and customs formalities at Bombay for returning Indians. The Ministry of Railways was also requested to facilitate journey to their destinations in India, especially from Bombay and Delhi.

Declaration of Pakistan as a Terrorist State

183. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir had stated in a press conference in the second week of October that "The UF Government was not lobbying strongly in world Capitals against Pak-sponsored terrorism";

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the endeavours being made by Government to persuade the USA and other advanced countries to declare Pakistan a terrorist State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALIM IQBAL SHERWANI): (a) to (c) It is the consistent policy of Government to keep the international community regularly informed of the factual position regarding Pakistan's support and promotion of terrorist activities directed against India. There is widespread recognition of Pakistan's support for terrorism.

भारत द्वारा सुरक्षा परिषद की स्थायी सदस्यता प्राप्त करने में असफलता

184. **चौधरी हरमोहन सिंह यादव:** क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि भारत संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघ में सुरक्षा परिषद की स्थायी सदस्यता प्राप्त नहीं कर सका;

(ख) यदि हां, तो इसके क्या कारण है; और

(ग) सरकार द्वारा यह सदस्यता प्राप्त करने हेतु क्या-क्या प्रयास किये गये है और पिछले तीन वर्षों के दौरान इस सम्बन्ध में किये गये प्रयासों का ब्यौरा क्या है?

विदेश मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री सलीम इकबाल शेरवानी): (क) से (ग) सुरक्षा परिषद के विस्तार का प्रश्न संयुक्त राष्ट्र में अभी भी विचाराधीन है। अभी तक उम्मीदवारों अथवा विस्तार के मानदण्डों पर कोई सहमति नहीं हुई है। संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद की स्थायी सदस्यता के लिए भारत की उम्मीदवारी की घोषणा 1994 में की गई थी। हाल ही में प्रधान मंत्री ने संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा के 52वें सत्र को संबोधित करते हुए भारत की उम्मीदवारी की बात दोहराई थी और कहा था कि भारत स्थायी सदस्यता की पूरी जिम्मेदारियों का दायित्व उठाने के लिए तैयार है। सरकार भारत की उम्मीदवारी के लिए समर्थन जुटाने के लिए अन्य सदस्य राज्यों के साथ भी संपर्क बनाए हुए हैं।